



WORLD HEALTH COLLABORATING CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH PRACTICE

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

- Globally public systems are not adequately prepared for rapidly evolving health threats.
- Many countries are decentralizing their public health systems without ensuring that the local public health infrastructure can cope with the increasing responsibilities and changing tasks.
- Regular measurement of a country's public health system performance is needed to ensure that its populations are protected and served by effective public health services.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC and the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) have worked collaboratively since 1996. In December 2001 these organizations established the World Health Collaborating Center for Public Health Practice. The center's mission is to strengthen public health systems globally and ensure the effective delivery of essential public health services through performance measurement, improvement planning, and systems development at both the national and subnational levels. Analysis of the data from the assessment of public health systems, completed in 42 countries around the world, continues to be done. Through this type of analysis, factors that can affect performance of health systems will be determined. Some countries have already begun to use the information in their national level health planning.

Examples of Program in Action

- The application of the assessment process in each country has been seen as an intervention in itself. The data are readily available for discussion by participants who are drawn from all levels of the health system. The discussions that take place permit immediate identification of problem areas within the system as well as targeted interventions to strengthen the system. This has led to some of the countries using the data to help develop national health plans. Jamaica has incorporated the data to plan a wide range of projects. A formal project is underway in collaboration with the Caribbean Program Office of PAHO to determine how other countries in the Caribbean have also used the data to strengthen health planning activities at all levels.
- In collaboration with the Caribbean Program Office of PAHO, the center facilitated participation of a team from that region to participate in the 2003–2004 leadership development program of the Public Health Leadership Institute. This is the first time that individuals from the English-speaking Caribbean will participate.
- The center continued its collaborative efforts with the World Bank, AfriHealth, and CDC's Sustainable Management Development Program (SMDP). From the collaboration with SMDP, an invitation was extended to the World Health Collaborating Center by Croatia to participate in the first Croatian Congress on Preventive Medicine and Health Promotion. Future work in the area of performance measurement and capacity building is anticipated with both Croatia and Macedonia.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Technical assistance services are being strengthened to support use of the assessment instrument. Some countries are developing regional and local level assessment instruments. Their use will be coordinated with national-level assessments. The instruments will promote collaboration of the public and private sectors. In partnership with the World Bank, the Collaborating Center will continue to work with that institution to ensure more targeted use of funds that will improve accountability and quality improvement of public health systems.

For additional information on this or other CDC programs, visit www.cdc.gov/program

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